

LESSON 5

GOD CALLS GIDEON

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Courageous

SCRIPTURE: Judges 6–7

GOD'S BIG STORY: God chooses Gideon to free the Israelites from the Midianites, but Gideon is afraid. God provides miraculous signs proving He is with Gideon and giving him courage to lead God's people into battle and defeat their enemies with God's help.

WORD OF WONDER: He will keep his covenant forever. He will keep his promise for all time to come.

—1 Chronicles 16:15

- PRESERVICE
 - OPTION 1 Multisensory Activity: How Big Is Your Courage?
 - OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Pick Your Path
- Welcome Question: Can you think of a time when you were really brave?
- SMALL GROUP
 - Declaring God's Wonder
 - Prayer of Invitation
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 - God's Big Story:
 - Connecting the Wonder Truth
 - In Awe of God's Wonder
 - Responding in Worship: King of My Heart
 - Blessing Your Kids



SCAN FOR THIS
WEEK'S VIDEO!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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SCRIPTURE: Judges 6–7

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Chronicles 16:15

When I encounter big obstacles, fear is often my first response. I occupy myself imagining worst-case scenarios and shrinking back from the challenge before me. I once heard this saying: “Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”

After Joshua died, the Israelites forgot what God had done for them and did evil in His sight. God raised up judges to guide the people and point them back to Him. Gideon seemed an unlikely pick for this position of power and authority—he even doubted it himself—but God continued to work gently with the reluctant judge.

Read Judges 6:11–16 and 7:1–8. Gideon was hiding when the Lord told him he would be a mighty warrior. After testing God several times, Gideon finally believed God was speaking to him. When Gideon did go into battle, the circumstances made it obvious that victory came from God alone.

- When have you felt inadequate for the task to which God is calling you?
- How have you seen God work through your inadequacy?
- How can you surrender your fear to God and deepen your dependence on Him today?

Gideon didn’t see himself as a “mighty warrior,” but as he trusted God, the Lord gave him boldness. When we put our faith in the Lord, God gives us courage.

Thank God for equipping us for His work and giving us boldness.

—**Suzanne Gosselin**

Children’s Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The book of Judges takes its name from its leading men and women—the judges of ancient Israel. They were individuals through whom God overthrew foreign oppression and established godly leadership.

WHAT?

Judges 6–7 tells the story of the judge named Gideon. When the Midianites were oppressing Israel, God sent Gideon to lead the Israelites in battle. Though Gideon was scared, God gave him courage. God helped him and just 300 soldiers defeat their oppressors.

WHERE?

The story takes place in Canaan, after Israel had occupied the land. The Midianites were oppressing the Israelites in their own land. Midian is the land where Moses lived for 40 years before God called him at the burning bush to deliver Israel from Egypt (Exodus 3).

WHEN?

The book of Judges is set after Joshua and the Israelites conquered Canaan and before Israel asked God for its first king, Saul. Several judges likely served at the same time in different parts of Israel. Gideon served around or after the time of Deborah.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

God often fulfills His plans through unexpected people. He chose Gideon and David, even though they were the least important members of their families. Likewise, God raised up Jesus, Israel's Messiah, from the house of a carpenter in the backwater town of Nazareth.

LESSON 5 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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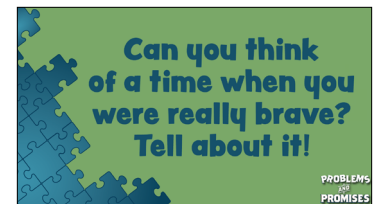
Series Bumper and Countdown Videos

Choose between the [Problems and Promises Bumper Video](#) and [Countdown Videos](#) to introduce the kids to the series.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Before kids arrive, [display the Gideon Welcome Question Slide](#) or write the following question on a whiteboard: “Can you think of a time when you were really brave? Tell about it!” Set out paper and coloring utensils.



As kids arrive ...

Welcome kids with a big smile and a “Glad to see ya!” Show them the Welcome Question and read it aloud to younger kids. Encourage kids to share their responses with two friends and to illustrate their answers on paper, if they choose.

At your start time ...

Gather the kids together and welcome them in a mighty warrior voice. Invite kids to stand and strike a mighty warrior pose each time someone shares their answer to the Welcome Question: **Can you think of a time when you were really brave? Tell about it!**

Thank you for sharing your amazing stories of bravery! Today in God's big story, we'll see how God gave courage to someone who didn't think he had what it took to accomplish what God was asking him to do.

OPTION 1 Multisensory Activity: How Big Is Your Courage?

SUPPLIES: cardboard boxes (6), paper plates (5), shaving cream, grapes, dirt, peeled tomatoes, hot dogs (2), bowl, corn syrup, packing tape, scissors (prep only), paper towels or wet wipes

Allergy Caution: This activity includes possible food allergens!

Ahead of time, prepare the cardboard boxes by placing one of the following items on a paper plate inside each box: shaving cream, grapes, dirt, peeled tomatoes, and hot dogs. Place the corn syrup in a bowl inside the last box. Tape each box closed and make a hole using scissors in the top that's just large enough for a kid to reach inside. Have paper towels or wet wipes nearby for easy clean up.

Display the **How Big Is Your Courage? Slide** and gather the kids. **Let's play a fun game called How Big Is Your Courage? I'm going to choose a volunteer to reach inside a box and tell me what she thinks is inside. It might be gross. It might be soft. Or it might tickle you! Who dares to play and discover how big their courage is?** Allow kids to respond.



Play the game and choose a different volunteer for each round, giving as many kids a chance to play as possible.

Do you remember what courage is? Allow kids to respond. **As Jesus-followers, having courage is all about trusting God in every situation, even when we feel afraid. Having the courage to do something you might be afraid to do can be pretty difficult ! Sometimes we might feel there's no way we could have the courage to do something that looks big or scary to us. But we can remember that when we trust God, He helps us have courage.** Display the **Gideon Wonder Truth Slide**. **Today's Wonder Truth is GOD HELPS US BE COURAGEOUS.**



Leader Tip: Some kids may be very reluctant to play this game—and that's the point! Remind kids that nothing will hurt them, but assure them it's OK if they prefer to enjoy the activity as spectators. Make everyone feel welcome and part of the fun!

OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Pick Your Path

Display the first Pick Your Path Slide and gather the kids in the center of the room, facing the screen. **Let's play a game called Pick Your Path! I'll tell you about several adventure scenarios in which you must choose between two paths. You'll go to one side of the room or the other based on which path you choose. Once there, you'll gather with others and come up with a story about what happened next. Let's get started with our first adventure scenario!**



Invite kids to walk in place as they imagine this scenario:

Scenario 1: **You walk into a cave. Down one path, you see glowing rocks. Down the other, you hear the trickling of water.** Display Pick Your Path Slide 2. **Which path do you choose: glowing rocks or trickling water?** Designate one side of the room for glowing rocks and the other for trickling water, then invite kids to go to the side of their choosing. Once all of the kids have chosen, invite them to gather with the kids who made the same choice and discuss what happens next in the story. Allow them about 30 seconds to come up with their ideas; then invite them to share!



Gather the kids again in the center of the room and invite them to walk in place as you share the next scenario and advance to the next Pick Your Path Slide. Repeat the same steps for each scenario.

Scenario 2: **You're trekking through the desert. The sun is scorching. You're hot and very thirsty. Down one path is a thick grove of shade trees. Down the other path is something that looks like a lake of water. Which path will you choose?**

Scenario 3: **You're hiking in the mountains when a sudden blizzard blows in. Down one path is a rock cave. Down the other is an abandoned cabin. Which path will you choose?**

Scenario 4: **It's nearing dusk, and you come across a rushing river that you must cross before nightfall. One path leads you across the river on an old, fallen log bridge. The other path leads you through a shallow—but very wide—spot in the river. Which path will you choose?**

After kids have picked their paths for all four scenarios and imagined what would happen next, gather everyone together. **If you actually faced the scenarios described in this game, choosing a path would require bravery. Courage is something even deeper than bravery: It's when we depend on God for whatever comes next, even when a situation seems uncertain or scary. Today in God's big story, we'll learn about a man named Gideon who wasn't naturally very brave, yet God helped him to be courageous.** Display the Gideon Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HELPS US BE COURAGEOUS.**



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the Gideon Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

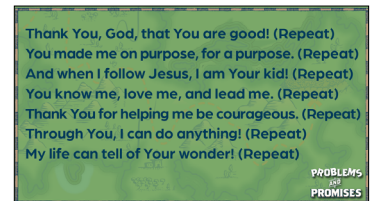
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You know what's best for me. (Kids repeat.)

Thank You for helping me be courageous. (Kids repeat.)

Through You, I can do anything! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, You're amazing! Thank You for who You are and for helping us be courageous. We invite Your Holy Spirit to teach us and lead us as we learn about You and Your Word today. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Through Jesus, God is with us always. He helps us be courageous! Let's worship Him now through music.

Play **Psalm 8, Over & Over** and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Display the [Gideon Title Slide](#). Tell kids today's story comes directly from the Bible, is 100% true, and is found in Judges 6–7. Help kids navigate Scripture by locating the book of Judges in the Old Testament. Invite them to find the chapter number by locating the big black number six.

Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll experience more of the story!

[Watch the God's Big Story Video](#)



LESSON 5 GOD CALLS GIDEON EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), hats (4 or more, 1 white and 3+ in other colors), towels or blankets (2), bowl of water, empty bowl, tape (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Stop Sign Sheet \(1/LG\)](#), Rooster Sound Effect (optional)

Ahead of time, print the Stop Sign Sheet and cut out the stop sign. For this storytelling, the preteens (or the oldest kids in your ministry) will act the story out on stage as the other kids do certain actions at their seats. Each of the kids on stage will wear a hat to designate who they are. The angel will wear a white hat, Gideon will wear a different colored hat, the Israelite(s) will wear a different color hat, and Midianite(s) will wear a different color hat. If you have many preteens, plan on having multiple Israelites and multiple Midianites. Read the script with your unique group in mind and think through how many and which ages of kids will be on stage, which hats they will wear, etc.



Leader Tip: Make sure the kids do not share the same hat!

Today's part of God's big story picks up in the book of Judges. As I tell the story, I'll need your help! Some of the oldest kids in our group will come up on stage to play different parts, while everyone else will listen carefully, so you can help from where you are. Let's get started!

At last, God had brought Abraham's family—the Israelites—into the promised land of Canaan. He led them, fought for them, and kept His promises to them. But sadly, God's people continued to reject Him and worship false gods called idols. Over and over, God's people turned away from the one true God, yet the one true God never turned away from them.

Whenever the Israelites stopped following God, their enemies would overpower them. But when the Israelites gave up their evil ways and came back to God, God raised up leaders called judges to save them from their enemies. God gave the judges courage and wisdom to guide the people well.

One of these judges was a man named Gideon. Invite a preteen to be Gideon and give him a hat to wear. Call it the "Gideon hat."

At first glance, Gideon was an odd choice to be a leader of Israel because he was not very brave. Gideon, can you please show us your scared face? Give your Gideon a chance to look afraid.

But Gideon's fear was not a problem for God because God was ready to help Gideon be courageous. God sent an angel to encourage Gideon. Invite up another preteen and give her the white hat to wear.

The angel came to Gideon and said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior," (Judges 6:12 NIV). Pause for your angel to repeat those words to Gideon.

The angel told Gideon that God wanted him to fight against the Midianites, who had taken over Israel's land and stolen their crops and livestock.

Invite one or more preteens up to be Midianites. Give them hats (of the same color) to wear—call the hats "Midianite hats."

Midianites, can I see your mean face? Pause for your Midianites to make mean faces.

Yikes! Let's see if that made Gideon any less afraid. Look at your Gideon, who can make another scared face. Hmm ... nope. Gideon looks the same. Let's see what happens next.

Gideon didn't feel very mighty. He was the least important person in the least important family. He wondered why God would choose him to save Israel. So, God encouraged Gideon again: "You are strong [and] I will be with you," God told him (from Judges 6:14, 16).

Gideon still wasn't convinced, so he asked the angel to give him a sign that God would really be with him. Pause for Gideon to ask the angel for a sign. Hmm ... a sign? I wonder what that means ... like a stop sign? Give the Stop Sign Sheet to Gideon and have him hold it up for everyone to see.

Like this type of sign? Allow kids to respond. Welp, that's not the type of sign Gideon wanted! Take the stop sign back from Gideon. I know! Gideon wasn't just looking for any sign. He was looking for a sign—or a signal—that God was really talking to him.

So, the angel burned up wet food with a touch of his staff. Gideon's courage grew! Now he knew he was really talking to an angel of God. Let's see Gideon's face get just a little braver. Give Gideon time to change his expression ever so slightly. Yep, looking good!

The Midianites gathered to attack Israel. We need the Israelite army! Invite one or more preteens up to be the Israelites and give them hats—"Israelite hats"—that are a different color than the previous hats. Have the Israelites and the Midianites stand on opposite ends of the stage facing each other. Gideon can stand at the front of the Israelites.

Gideon was braver than before, but he was still scared. He asked God for another sign. Gideon said he would put out a sheepskin overnight, and if the morning dew covered the sheepskin but not the ground around it, Gideon would know God would be with him. Give Gideon a towel or blanket to lay on the floor.

OK, time to go to sleep. The Midianites slept. Go to sleep, Midianites. Your Midianites lie down and pretend to sleep. Good job. Gideon and the Israelite army slept ... Go to sleep, Gideon and the Israelites. Your Gideon and Israelites lie down and pretend to sleep. Good job. Now everyone, join them and sleep. Encourage all the kids to lie down and pretend to go to sleep.

Whisper this next part as if they're really asleep: While Gideon slept, something amazing happened. God gave Gideon the sign he asked for!

Dip the towel or blanket in the water and lay it on the ground.

In the morning, the ground was dry, but the sheepskin was so wet with dew that the water from it filled an entire bowl! Invite everyone to wake up and sit up. Give Gideon the towel and have him wring it out into the empty bowl.

Again, Gideon's courage grew. Still, Gideon asked for one more sign. This time, he wanted the sheepskin to be dry but the ground around it to be wet with dew. So to bed they went once again!

Have Gideon lay out another towel or blanket and have the kids lie down and pretend to sleep again. After a few seconds, make a rooster sound (or play the Rooster Sound Effect) and have the kids wake up.

Sure enough, when Gideon woke up the next day, the ground was wet, and the sheepskin was dry. His courage grew again, and he trusted that God would support him. Let's see your most courageous face, Gideon. Allow your Gideon to stand and look courageous! The Midianites and Israelites can also stand.

Gideon gathered 32,000 Israelite soldiers to fight against the Midianites. But God said this was too many people! If the Israelites won, they would think they had saved themselves. So Gideon told everyone who was afraid to fight to leave; only 10,000 men stayed. If you have three or more Israelites, have everyone return to their seats except two of them.

But God said this number was still too large! So, God told Gideon to go down to a stream and keep only the men who knelt and cupped the water with their hands to drink it. Have one more Israelite return to his seat, so there's only one left on stage next to Gideon.

Only 300 soldiers remained to fight the entire Midianite army. And with God's help, they won the battle and sent the Midianites running for the hills!

Dismiss the remaining preteens to their seats.

Gideon had never thought of himself as a mighty warrior, but God helped him grow in courage as he trusted God. When we trust God, God helps us be courageous.

Collect all the hats and lead the kids in a round of applause for all the actors.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Gideon Wonder Truth Slide.

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HELPS US BE COURAGEOUS.**

Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

God often fulfills His plans through people we wouldn't expect! God chose Gideon, even though he was the least important member of his family, and God helped him be courageous. Many years later, God raised up Jesus, the Savior, from the humble house of a carpenter in the small, unimportant town of Nazareth. You don't have to be big or considered important by others to be a part of what God is doing on earth—you just have to trust God, and He will help you be courageous.



In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

What part of today's story made you wonder? Allow kids to answer freely.

God sent signs to Gideon to prove that He would be with him. Did it surprise you that it took several times before Gideon fully trusted God? How many times would it take for you to have enough courage to do what Gideon was being asked to do? Allow kids to answer freely.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson. ***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.

WORSHIP VIDEO: King of My Heart



Blessing Your Kids

Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

Blessing: May you remember God is always with you. When you are afraid or lack courage, God is always there to help give you courage. May God remind you to trust Him in all things.

